

THE MISSIONARY'S CALL.

The following is the original, unbridged form of "The Missionary's Call," by Dr. Nathan Brown, Baptist missionary to Japan.

My soul is not at rest. There comes a strange And secret whisper to my spirit, like A dream of night, that tells me I am on Enchanted ground. Why live I here?

The vows Of God are on me, and I may not stop To play with shadows, or pluck earthly flowers.

Till I my work have done, and rendered up Account. The voice of my departed Lord, "Go teach all nations," from the Eastern world Comes on the night air, and awakes my ear.

And I will go. I may no longer doubt To give up home and friends and idol hopes.

And every tender tie that binds my heart To thee, my country! Why should I regard Earth's little store of borrowed sweets?

I sure Have had enough of bitter in my cup To show that never was it his design Who placed me here, that I should live in ease, Or drink at pleasure's fountain.

Henceforth, then, It matters not if storm or sunshine be My earthly lot—bitter or sweet my cup, I only pray, "God fit me for the work— God make me holy and my spirit nerve For the stern hour of strife." Let me but know

There is an arm unseen that holds me up, An eye that kindly watches all my path, Till I my weary pilgrimage have done, Let me but know I have a friend that waits

To welcome me to glory and I joy To tread the dark and death-fraught wilderness.

And when I come to stretch me for the last, In unattended agony, beneath The cocoon's shade, or lift my dying eyes From Africa's burning sand, it will be sweet

That I have toiled for other worlds than this. I know! I shall feel happier than to die On softer bed. And if I should reach heaven—

If one that has so deeply, darkly sinned— If one whom ruin and revolt have held With such a fearful grasp—if one for whom Satan has struggled as he hath for me, Should ever reach that blessed shore—Oh how

This heart will glow with gratitude and love! And through the ages of eternal years, Thus saved, my spirit never shall repent That toil and suffering once were mine below.

Visitor Pupilt.

BAPTIST BELIEF.

PECULIAR PRINCIPLES OF A PRIMITIVE PEOPLE PREACHED AT ST. PAUL'S REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH, CHICAGO, SUNDAY EVENING, MARCH 30, 1880, BY G. C. LORIMER, D. D.

"Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?"—Solomon's Song, viii. 5.

Not inappropriately is this course of sermons opened by the Baptists, as there are reasons for believing that they are the oldest body of Christians who dissent from the assumptions of the Romish church. Historically they are not Protestants; for while they sympathized with the protest offered by the reformers at the Diet of Spire, 1529, in which this now famous name originated, their existence antedates it by many centuries. There is certainly no sufficient grounds for the statement so frequently hazarded, and so widely circulated that they are the spiritual offspring of Roger Williams, Menno, or of Thomas Munzer.

Menno Simons united with them in 1537, and prior to that time in 1527, Zwingle published in the second part of his *Elenchus contra Catabaptistas*, a copy of the earliest confession of their faith and two years before, in 1525, Munzer ended his labors beneath the headman's axe.

Zwingle also admits, while calling them "fanatical, stolid, audacious impious," their great antiquity, for he writes, "The institution of Anabaptism is no novelty, but for 1300 years has caused great disturbance in the church"—that is, to within three hundred years of our Saviour's birth.

Mosheim, the Lutheran church historian, not only testifies that "before the rise of Luther and Calvin they lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe people who adhered tenaciously to the principles of the modern Dutch Baptists," but concedes that their origin "is hidden in the depths of antiquity."

And Robinson (*Ecc. Researches*) relates the following curious circumstance, that may be taken as additional evidence that the Baptists are warranted in the rejection of a Protestant origin: "In 1519, six years before Luther appeared before the Diet of Worms, a letter was addressed to Erasmus from Bohemia describing a people who never had affinity for Rome. Two of these brethren waited on Luther and Erasmus to congratulate them on their recession from Rome, but the same were declined because they were Anabaptists."

It is not necessary for me to attempt, even adequate material for the undertaking, to trace an unbroken succession of Baptist churches from those which were founded by the apostles

as they do not regard such a succession as indispensable to the validity of their ordination or their ordinances. It may be possible to show, as I think it is, that primitive Christianity perpetuated itself in the Novation communities which, according to Kurtz, prevailed "almost through the whole Roman empire," and which were subsequently known as Donatists, Montanists, bodies of believers who are classed together by Alizog, Ebrard, Herzog, Jacobi, and Fricke, and with whom the Baptists of our day are in substantial accord, and it may further be inferred from the writings of the venerable Bede, that in Britain the earliest churches agreed with these sects in every essential particular, but that in the course of time they were almost exterminated by the corruptions of the papacy, a few only surviving in Wales, and were resuscitated perhaps through the labors of the Lollards, whose views were current in England during the fourteenth century, and ultimately became known as Anabaptists. From England their principles were transmitted to America (not by Roger Williams, as was proven by the Rev. Dr. Duncan in his *History*), where they have taken deep root, and where they flourish to a degree quite remarkable.

All this very likely could be substantiated, and an unbroken succession established, were there interests of sufficient magnitude at stake to justify the effort. But they are not. The Baptists are convinced that the churches of one generation are under no necessity of tracing their existence to those of preceding ages. They contend that it is in harmony with the genius of Christianity to suppose that baptized believers enjoy an indefeasible right to organize themselves when and where they please into churches, and that when thus organized they are duly authorized by Christ to ordain to the ministry and to administer the ordinances.

The cumbersome machinery and magical efficacy of ecclesiastical succession they repudiate as contrary to the simplicity of the gospel, and as unfitted to meet the vicissitudes and trials of such a world as this. According to their theory, if the churches of one period should become extinct through persecution or corruption; without the consent of priest, potentate or council they can be re-constituted or re-formed at any subsequent period whenever a company of disciples shall so determine. On the supposition that this elastic doctrine is Scriptural the Baptists feel that they may be indifferent to their descent, and consequently lay no stress upon it whatever. They argue that if they are apostolic in their principles and practice, it matters little from whence they came or how they came.

To enable you to form an intelligent opinion as to the extent of their conformity to such a standard, I have been requested to present in this discourse what the Baptists believe. In performing this congenial but unsought for service, I am not unmindful of the delicacy of my position, and while exercising all the freedom which the invitation to speak implies I trust I shall not fail in that courtesy which its acceptance imposes.

Baptists believe in THE SUPREMACY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Whatever theories of inspiration may divide their scholars, they uniformly hold that the Bible contains a revelation from God, which is all sufficient both for faith and practice. While they do not deny that "the heavens declare the glory of God," and would rather encourage than interdict the reverent study of nature, they are persuaded that the world has little to hope for religiously from that source. They fail to see any signs that naturalistic worship has ever promoted the spiritual interests of mankind, or is fitted to do so, and are therefore unwilling to commit them to the keeping of so weak a guardianship. God in his works must be supplemented by God in his word; and that word must be comprehensive enough to meet the varied and deep necessities of such a race as ours. The Baptists have no confidence in the claims that have been put forth of late on behalf of reason in its relation to Holy Writ. The assumption, that it is qualified to judge in advance what a revelation should reveal, they treat as preposterous, and as rendering superfluous every communication from heaven. Why should God take the pains to say anything, when everything he ought to say is already anticipated? The human mind is to interpret, not to suggest; to find out the meaning of what has been made known, not to intrude some preconception of its own. This is the idea that governs the denomination whom I represent, and consequently they conscientiously try to follow the teachings of the Bible implicitly and explicitly. They repudiate the authority of tradition, and refuse to recognize as binding the decision of councils. Not even are there own creeds and symbols of faith allowed to supersede the authority of the Bible. They are all subordinate to its teachings, and are only provided as a guide to inquiries, such

as help to fellowship, and as a vindication of the misrepresentation of adversaries.

The Baptists sincerely, seriously and alone adopt the immortal saying of Chillingworth, "the Bible the whole Bible, nothing but the Bible, the religion of Protestants," as their fundamental principle by which they are prepared to stand or fall. And it is at this point that their troubles begin. When other religious bodies claim the right to modify or abolish institutions that are solemnly sanctioned by Scripture, or to supersede them with ordinances of their own devising, they feel called on to protest against the assumption as tending to lessen the authority of revelation, and as encouraging the rationalistic to reject it altogether. If a believer may trifle with impunity with the least command of God, how can he expect to inspire the skeptical with reverence even for the greatest? If he consults his own convenience, follows his own fancies in dealing with these great matters, and if he is an eclectic in faith and practice, how can he successfully controvert those, who acting on the self-same principle, select for their guidance the ethics of the Bible and reject its theology? There seems to be no *via media*, no middle ground, and satisfied of this, the Baptists make their determined stand on the side of God's truth. They who fail to perceive the spirit by which they are animated, are disposed at times to attribute their scrupulousness to unworthy narrowness. Ridicule and reproach are heaped upon them for simply doing what Protestants extol, when they are not in question, as the course which they themselves are pursuing—following the Scriptures strictly in spirit and in letter. It is not for me to criticize the consistency of our critics, but assuredly we have a right to expect that they shall treat ours with consideration and respect. If they think we are wrong in adhering to the Bible so rigidly, let them say so; but in the name of justice let them not exalt its authority, and in the same breath characterize us as bigots for doing what they themselves admit it commands.

The Baptists believe in THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR.

They are heartily and radically evangelical in their views of salvation. The form of their faith is expressed by the Apostle Paul in the words, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." The divinity of Christ, the efficiency of the atonement, and the sovereignty of grace are cardinal doctrines with them. They teach that religion is a personal affair, that it springs from the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart impelling the sinner towards the Saviour, in whom, and in whom alone, is everlasting life. That this work effects a spiritual renovation, and is the source of I thought that salvation is limited to the Baptists or to any other section of Christendom; and it affords me the profoundest satisfaction to expect that in heaven I shall meet all who have loved our Lord Jesus Christ on earth, whether they were called Romanist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, Unitarian, or by no denominational name at all.

The Baptists believe in THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH.

They claim that the communities founded by Christ and organized by the apostles were composed of those who had been renewed by the Spirit. Of course it is not denied that such characters as Simon Magus might intrude, but it is contended that it was never designed that such deceivers should be received into membership. Each church was to be a household of faith, a family of God, a brotherhood of saints. Dr. Schaff says, "Paul defines the church as the body of Jesus Christ. He thus represents it as an organic living system of various members and functions, and at the same time as the abode of Christ and the organ of his redeeming and sanctifying influence upon the world." And if he is correct in this statement, then it follows that unconverted persons, even though the children of believers, are necessarily ineligible to church fellowship. This, at least, is the view maintained by the Baptists through many weary centuries. Referring to the Donatists, Merivale in his *Lectures* writes, "They represented the broad principle of the Montanists and the Novations, that the true church of Christ is the assembly of really pious persons only, and admits of no merely nominal membership." Haast observes (*Geschichte der Taufgesinnten*), "The doctrine of spiritual regeneration, the soul of Christianity, has perhaps never been taught with deeper feeling and adhered to with greater zeal than by the despised Anabaptists. Their aim was the highest possible—a church of saints. Nowhere in church history is found such a subjugation of all other motives to the religious, such

an approach to the order and life of the church of the apostles." And Jorg (*Hist. of Protestantism*) testifies "that all the Anabaptists wanted an entirely new church, a church of believers." This was the tremendous heresy for which these poor people suffered affliction and death in ages when secularism had corrupted the Kingdom of Christ. They saw that the church and the world were in unholy alliance, and that the temple of the Lord had become a den of thieves, and they persistently sought to correct the evil. The remedy they proposed was a return of the institution of Christ—a converted membership. Kings and ecclesiastics, who larded it over the church, denounced them as traitors, inquisitors adjudged them to be heretics, and Protestants, such as Luther and Zwingle, looked upon them as fanatics. Their warnings were ignored and their endeavors to secure a return to the primitive standard of piety were derided at the time of the Reformation, and as a consequence its churches became as worldly and as subservient to the State as any that had preceded them. In England, in Scotland, in Germany, in France, the fundamental error of Romanism was perpetuated by State ecclesiastical establishments claiming to be Protestant. The humiliating and shameful history of these bodies I shall not undertake to relate.

This radical view of the essential nature of the visible church determines, to some extent, the character of its government. Gibbon (*Decline and Fall of Roman Empire*) testifies that "for more than one hundred years after the death of the apostles, every society formed within itself a separate and independent republic" and Mostheim acknowledges that "the churches of these early times were entirely independent one of another." The same historian adds, "Whoever supposes that the bishops of the first and golden age of the church corresponded with the bishops of the following centuries, must blend and confound characters that are very different. For in this century and the next a bishop had charge of a single church, which might ordinarily be contained in a private house; nor was he its lord, but was in reality its minister or servant." Rev. G. A. Jacob, D.D., late head master of Christ's Hospital, England, an Episcopal writer of some brilliancy, in his work on *The Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament* confirms these views. He says (page 26), "The apostles had no successors in their office." * * * "They stand alone as men appointed and commissioned by Christ himself, and not by man; whereas all Christian ministers since their time, of whatsoever order or degree, have been fallible men, and have been appointed and commissioned by man—by the authority of the particular church in which they were to minister." And on page 146 he continues, "Though the whole church might be termed a spiritual monarchy under Christ its king, each Christian community was a republic. The clergy were its representative and responsible officers; and as such were invested with official authority, and were entitled to due respect and submission."

What these impartial witnesses thus set forth as the teachings of the New Testament, is good, sound Baptist doctrine, and seems to flow necessarily from the Scriptural conception of a church. If its members are converted, if they enjoy equal spiritual privileges in Christ, then it must follow when they are organized into a society, that being all qualified, they should alike participate in its government. Consequently, with us every local congregation is self-governing and independent, subject to no ecclesiastical interference from without, and bound to other bodies only by the ties of common faith and mutual love, or united to them for the furtherance of general interests which can be more vigorously prosecuted in companies than alone.

The Baptists also believe in THE STABILITY OF THE SYMBOLIC ORDINANCES.

These are baptism and the Lord's supper. That they were to be perpetuated is permitted by universal Christendom, with the exception of the Quakers, and need not therefore be discussed. But there is not the same agreement regarding the permanence of their form; perhaps I ought to limit this to the form of baptism. The Roman Catholic church claims the right to change, after, and even abrogate ordinances of divine appointment, and the same to some extent has been practiced by Protestants. Romanists justify their assumption on the ground of infallibility; in what way Protestants vindicate their course I shall not presume to indicate. That such changes have been made, especially in the institution of baptism, is very generally conceded by Protestants themselves. Originally that ordinance was administered to believers, and to believers only. There is not a single instance in the New Testament to the contrary. This is candidly acknowledged by Dr. Jacob, the Episcopal

authority already quoted, who says (page 271), "Like modern Episcopacy, (the baptism of infants) is an ecclesiastical institution legitimately deduced by church authority from apostolic principles, but not apostolic in its actual existence." "There is no trace of it until the last part of the second century." In this particular that a departure has taken place. Unconscious babes have been substituted throughout a large portion of Christendom for those to whom this ordinance was exclusively administered in primitive times. And the same is true of the act itself from which the ceremony derives its name. On this point, as on the foregoing, I could quote a multitude of authorities dare I trespass so far on your good nature; but I will merely cite one of the most recent, Dean Stanley. He declares that "for the first thirteen hundred years the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, and which is the very meaning of the word 'baptize'—that those who were baptized were plunged, submerged, immersed into the water. And he adds, "The rubric (of the church of England) in the Public Baptism for infants enjoins that, unless for special cases, they are to be dipped, not sprinkled." (See *Nineteenth Century* Oct. 1879.) I suppose that it will hardly be questioned that the Dean of Westminster, in this passage voices the conviction of modern scholarship? The learned of all denominations are on his side; and we may regard it as settled beyond debate that the primitive form of baptism was immersion.

The Baptists contend that it should be maintained; that in all its essential features—subjects and acts as well—it should be perpetuated. They believe this because it cannot be shown that any body of disciples, or any ecclesiastical council is empowered to modify or alter a divine institution. When the text can be quoted authorizing any one to annul or amend God's baptismal law, then the Baptist will acknowledge the validity of sprinkling; but until then they must regard the assumed right as fictitious, presumptuous and dangerous. They also fail to see how a symbolic act can be radically changed and the symbol yet remain. It is of the nature of a sign that it bear some resemblance to the idea signified. How then, can the sign be seriously tampered with, and the idea be expressed just the same? If this is impossible, and that it is all thoughtful persons must admit, then the primitive form of baptism must be retained, otherwise it cannot speak the message that it was designed to communicate. By consulting Rom. vi. 3, 5; Col. ii. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 29 and 1 Peter iii. 21, it will be seen that the ordinance is related to the resurrection of Jesus, and to the spiritual quickening from soul-death of the sinner. It shows forth the great fact on which Christianity rests, and the great moral transformation it effects. A burial in water, with the subsequent emergence from the flood, impressively suggests these ideas; and if they are to be expressed at all, the symbolization must be perpetuated. Asperion does not and cannot suggest a resurrection either spiritual or literal, and, consequently, Baptists feel bound to preserve that which can. For these reasons they insist on keeping inviolate the ordinance as it was originally given by Christ and his apostles.

Baptism precedes the Lord's supper, and according to the uniform testimony of the creeds and the practice of all denominations, the latter should only be administered to those who have submitted to the former. The Baptists accept this as the law of the Bible on the subject; but as they can only admit immersion to be valid baptism, they are compelled either to be inconsistent and invite to the table those whom they do not believe to be baptized, or to appear exclusive and restrict it to those who have. Either alternative is not very pleasant.

Finally, the Baptists believe in THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE.

They have been from the beginning the determined enemies of religious oppression. Herbert S. Skeats (*Free Church of England*, page 24) who takes pains to let his readers know that he is not a Baptist, bears this testimony, "It is the singular and distinguished honor of the Baptists, to have repudiated from their earliest history all coercive power over the consciences and the actions of men with reference to religion. No sentence is to be found in all their writings inconsistent with those principles of Christian liberty and willingness which are now equally dear to all the free Congregational churches of England. They were the proto-evangelists of the voluntary principle." Bowser, at the close of the seventeenth century, declared that he only knew two bodies who denied the right of the civil magistrate to punish religious error, and they were the Socinians and Anabaptists. As Bancroft admits, "Freedom of conscience, unlimited freedom of mind,

was from the first the trophy of the Baptists." In our day we extol men as Channing, and rightly, too, their advocacy of these sentiments as though they had originated them and forget that they are but the such men as Hubmeyer, who in early part of the sixteenth century declared that "Faith is in the heart and you cannot force that by threats and chains. Thought and belief not be obstructed by violence fettered by disabilities, but are toll free in all travel and chamber mind." This Baptist pastor of Wshut in these words expresses the found conviction of our people who led them to denounce as unholy alliance between church and State and side with every moment for dissolution. For this cause they counted not their lives dear, and its triumph both in Europe and America they surrendered everything that men deem desirable on earth, it is beautiful! pathetically beautiful to mark the devotion of these men to the principle of religious liberty, though they were humble and generally unlettered, their strong common sense and deep spiritual insight enabled them to perceive that the same in its relations with the State should be untrammelled by earthly authority and unawed by earthly power. They foresaw what the world and prudent, the lordly bishop, the hooded priest, could not but themselves to regard as possible, kings, princes, states and even ecclesiastics would wake from the delusion of ages and acknowledge the right of every human being to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. In the sweet hope they lived, for this faith they uncomplainingly suffered and now their children, yea, and world, inherit the glorious heritage their patient toil and tears.

What these Baptists believed who it cost something to believe it, the descendants hold and cherish. They still stand for the sovereignty of conscience. They are opposed to sectarianism in the public schools, to taxation for the benefit of religious corporations, and to everything that looks like a policy of proscription. Their ancient antagonists, the Roman Catholics, who formerly took eminent delight in burning them, they would not have molested on account of the faith, or treated in any sense liberally. They recognize the civil right of infidels and atheists to repudiate Christianity altogether if they will, and would, were it necessary, go to defend it. Certainly they can sympathize with the farcical attitude of some members of the English House of Commons, whose conscientious scruples will not permit them to sit with Bradlaugh, the atheist, but would consent to sit with Bradlaugh, the perjurer. They cannot but hope that the honorable member will steadily refuse to take an oath to which he cannot honestly subscribe, and that such a mockery will never in any shape occur in America. Sovereignty of conscience is also part of the organic law of their churches. Their members as ministers are free to think for themselves, and while some measure of agreement is absolutely essential to unity of aim and action, they are not inclined to magnify it at the expense of personal independence. They desire all who unite with them to do so from a sense of duty, and only ask, when they can no longer fellowship conscientiously with the sentiments, to withdraw from the same sense of duty. Freedom in going, freedom in remaining, and freedom in going, is a fundamental principle of our churches; and if worthless, would be consistent with the past devotion to liberty of conscience anything more would be inconsistent with their unswerving loyalty to the gospel of Christ.

After centuries spent in comparative obscurity, and in a desperate struggle to maintain a position of dependence, the Baptists have advanced to a conspicuous place in the Christian world. From the wilderness they have come forth leaning upon the Beloved. The wilderness behind them, the fair garden of opportunity is around them and stretches out before them. In entering gathery rich fruits, while they are ashamed of their garments, and thinking that their principles may be compared to a queen's clothing, humble and thankfully would at times point to their spotless beauty, yet they think more of the Beloved, and would rather have the eyes of the world fastened on him upon whom they lean than on the peculiar fashion of the denominational attire. As the true bride has no eyes for her ornament but for her princely lover who conferred them, so the true church continually looks away from him who hath saved her with his blood, and magnifies him supremely in the sight of the nations. In this spirit the Baptists seek to live and labor.

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